

REMARKS

Claims 1-30 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 4-7, and 9-17 have been previously withdrawn from consideration.

The Applicant thanks Examiner Patel and Examiner Flynn for conducting a telephonic interview on April 1, 2008. During that interview Examiners Patel and Flynn clarified the pending rejections and helped the Applicant understand the rejections with respect to references Lu, Bulfer and Sherman. This Response incorporates the substance of the interview.

In the Office Action dated January 16, 2008, claims 2, 3, 8 and 18-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2002/0107950 A1 to Lu ("Lu") in view of U.S. Patent Publication US 2006/0036701 to Bulfer et al. ("Bulfer") and in further view of U.S. Patent Publication US 2002/0194177 A1 to Sherman et al. ("Sherman"). The Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner sets forth on page 16 of the Office Action that Lu and Bulfer fail to teach "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message." The Examiner turns to Sherman to supply this limitation.

In the Applicant's August 1, 2007 Response to the 35 U.S.C. 112 rejection of the May 1, 2007 Office Action, the Applicant identifies support in the specification for the above-referenced "notifying" limitation. At page 11 of the present Office Action, the Examiner asserts that this is what Sherman teaches. The Applicant respectfully disagrees.

The Applicant presented text from paragraphs [0028], [0032], [0044] and [0050], as well as Figures 2A and 3A as support for the "notifying" limitation. This text describes one embodiment in support of the claims, but the claims are broader than this one embodiment. It is therefore improper for the Examiner to characterize the "notifying" limitation as "nothing but" the selected disclosure of paragraphs [0028] and [0044].

As the Applicant set forth in the August 1, 2007 response, a message that has been approved during the review process is moved from the unapproved folder to the approved folder. Once the approvers' devices are synchronized, all of the other approvers can see that the approved message has been moved from the unapproved folder to the approved folder. The other approvers have thereby been "notified" of the change of status (i.e., unapproved to approved) of the message.

The synchronization described in Sherman does not provide such notification because neither Lu, Bulfer nor Sherman, alone or in combination, teach or suggest any way of distinguishing approved and unapproved electronic messages. For example, these references do not teach or suggest "approved" and "unapproved" folders for holding electronic messages, as the Applicant's specification does. Messages identified for approval or deletion via the checkboxes 204 of Bulfer are processed as described in paragraphs [0025] and [0026] (i.e., either deleted or forwarded to the child), but synchronization will not "notify" other approvers of message status since the messages identified have already been processed.

Thus, the synchronization of Sherman cannot convey the change of status of an electronic message to other approvers, thereby notifying the at least one other approver as required by the claims. In other words, neither Lu, Bulfer nor Sherman, alone or in combination, teach or suggest anything that changes or alters upon approval or rejection of an electronic message, that would be apparent to the other approvers upon the synchronization described in Sherman.

The Examiner points to Bulfer's "approval folder" as providing the notification requirement upon synchronization. However Bulfer, at paragraph [0022], teaches that, "[a] parent inbox 122 stores messages for the parent client 102b and an EPC or approval inbox 124 stores messages to be reviewed for approval. Approved messages are forwarded to the child account filter 110 for message processing and sender addition, as described below." (emphasis added). Thus, synchronizing the approval inbox 124 of Bulfer provides no information to the other approvers regarding the electronic messages, since those messages stored in the approval box have not yet been reviewed (see above, "to be reviewed").

The above-mentioned "notifying" limitation is not taught or suggested by Lu, Bulfer or Sherman or any combination of those references. For at least this reason, the rejection of claims 18 and 26 are improper and should be withdrawn.

Since claims 2, 3, 19-25 depend from allowable claim 18, and claims 8 and 27-30 depend from allowable claim 26, these claims should also be allowable.

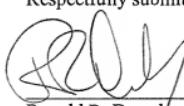
In view of the above remarks, the Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Filed herewith is a Request for a One-Month Extension of Time, which extends the statutory period for response to expire on May 16, 2008. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that this response is being timely filed.

Applicant believes no other fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 08-0219, under Order No. 0113715.00134US1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Respectfully submitted,

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